

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8918

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY VIETNANE

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 3900

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VN, VS, CG, MILI

SUBJECT: JAPANESE VIEW: DENOUEMENT IN INDOCHINA?

SUMMARY: JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AND MEDIA ARE SHOCKED BY
PRECIPITOUS DETERIORATION OF SITUATION IN SVN BUT EXPECT
COMMUNIST MOMENTUM TO BE MAINTAINED.

IMMEDIATE UNRAVELLING OF SITUATION IN BOTH
KHMER AND SOUTH VIETNAM ATTRIBUTED DIRECTLY TO US CON-
GRESSIONAL UNWILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL MILITARY
AID. BROADER IMPLICATIONS FOR JAPAN'S SECURITY AND
POLICIES NOW APPEAR INCREASINGLY IN CONVERSATIONS AMONG
AND WITH JAPANESE. BARRING ANOTHER DRAMATIC REVERSAL OF
FORTUNES, MANY OBSERVERS IN PRESS AND FONOFF SEEM TO
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BELIEVE THAT THIRTY YEARS' OF INDOCHINA WAR MAY FINALLY BE

NEARING END. REFLECTING THIS GRIM ASSESSMENT, FONMIN MIYAZAWA TOLD DIET GOJ WOULD REASSESS POLICIES TOWARD INDOCHINA. AID WOULD BE SHIFTED FROM RECONSTRUCTION TO HUMANITARIAN RELIEF FOR REFUGEES, AVOIDING PROJECTS WHERE FUNDS COULD EVEN INDIRECTLY CONTRIBUTE TO MILITARY POTENTIAL. END SUMMARY.

1. THEME THAT HAS BEGUN TO EMERGE WITH SOME CONSISTENCY AMONG FONOFF OFFICIALS AND MEDIA IS THAT THIRTY-YEARS WAR IN INDOCHINA MAY BE NEARING CONCLUSION WITH COMMUNISTS CLOSE TO FINAL VICTORY. UNEXPECTEDLY QUICK STRANGLING OF PHNOM PENH'S ACCESS TO OUTSIDE WORLD DURING CURRENT OFFENSIVE IS OVERSHADOWED NOW BY STUNNING DEBACLE IN SVN. FONOFF CONTACTS AND PRESS IDENTIFY IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF PRECIPITATE UNRAVELLING OF KHMER AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE SITUATIONS AS US CONGRESSIONAL REFUSAL TO PROVIDE MILITARY AID TO PHNOM PENH AND SAIGON. IN VIEW OF JAPANESE OBSERVERS, HANOI'S FORCES, ENCOURAGED BY LACK OF EFFECTIVE US RESPONSE AFTER NVN AND VIET CONG FORCIBLY AND BLANTANTLY TOOK PHUOC LONG PROVINCE IN JANUARY, NOW MOVE WITH IMPUNITY INTO ONE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL AFTER ANOTHER. UNLESS THE US UNDERTAKES COUNTERMEASURES THROUGH PROVISION OF MILITARY AID OR DIPLOMATIC MEANS, FEW JAPANESE OBSERVERS EXPECT NORTH VIETNAM'S OFFENSIVE TO END UNTIL PRES THIEU IS ULTIMATELY ROUTED AND A COMMUNIST OR "NEUTRAL" REGIME IS SET UP IN SAIGON.

2. ALONG THESE LINES, FONOFF FIRST SE ASIA DIVISION DIRECTOR HANABUSA DESCRIBED TO US THREE MAJOR SHIFTS IN HANOI'S STRATEGY SINCE DECEMBER, ALL DESIGNED TO TEST US RESOLVE AS US CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION TO MAINTAINING AID, ESPECIALLY MILITARY, BECAME CLEARER AND CLEARER: HANABUSA ASSERTED THAT AFTER FIRST TACTICAL SWITCH BY HANOI CALLING IN DECEMBER FOR PRESIDENT THIEU'S OVERTHROW, HANOI, SECONDLY, SEIZED PHUOC LONG PROVINCE. US FAILED TO RESPOND AND HANOI NOW AS A THIRD STAGE IS MOVING WITH SEEMING FREEDOM TO TAKE SUCCESSION OF USUALLY UNDEFENDED PROVINCES. NEXT AND FINAL OBJECTIVE IS SAIGON, ACCORDING HANABUSA. NEVERTHELESS, REFLECTING CONTINUING HOPE FOR EFFECTIVE US ACTION, EDITORIALS URGE THE US TO

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MAKE MAXIMUM DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS PRIMARILY IN MOSCOW, PEKING AND WITH HANOI TO END THE FIGHTING AND NEGOTIATE A COALITION GOVERNMENT OF CONCILIATION AS ENVISAGED IN PARIS ACCORDS.

YOMIURI, UNIQUELY, CALLED FOR DISCONTINUATION OF US AID IN THE PROCESS. DESPITE HOPE FOR A US MIRACLE, WE GUESS THAT FEW EXPECT SUCCESS. REVERBERATIONS ARE EXPECTED OUTSIDE INDOCHINA, IMMEDIATELY IN THAILAND, BUT LATER IN WIDER

CIRCLES OF ASIAN STATES WHICH HAVE TIED THEIR FORTUNES CLOSELY TO THE US. REGARDLESS OF THE MERITS OF THE CASE, OBSERVERS LIKE HANABUSA COMMENT TO US THAT US IRRESOLUTENESS IN INDOCHINA WEAKENED THE US POSITION IN THE ME AND CONTRIBUTED TO FAILURE OF SECRETARY'S RECENT MISSION.

3. CONCERN OVER IMPLICATIONS FOR JAPAN'S POLICIES AND SECURITY ENTER INCREASINGLY IN CONVERSATIONS AMONG AND WITH JAPANESE. FONOFF ASST DEPONMIN FOR ADMINISTRATION MOTONO TOLD US MARCH 24 THAT IN PAST FEW WEEKS CONSERVATIVE HARD-LINE LDP DIETMEN IN PARTY DISCUSSIONS OF NPT RATIFICATION HAVE INCREASINGLY REFERRED TO DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA IN CALLING FOR CAUTION IN RATIFYING NPT UNTIL LONG-TERM SECURITY COMMITMENTS FROM THE US ARE CREDIBLY RECONFIRMED. MOTONO SAID CONSERVATIVE LDP-ERS AND, HE ANTICIPATED, THE PRESS WILL, HOWEVER INACCURATELY OR INVIDIOUSLY, MAKE ANALOGIES BETWEEN US ASSURANCES TO INDOCHINESE GOVERNMENTS AND SECURITY COMMITMENTS TO JAPAN. PRO-US JAPAN TIMES CONSERVATIVE EDITOR OGAWA DID SO IN HIS COLUMN MARCH 24.

4. IN TERMS OF INDOCHINA POLICIES AND UN POLICIES CONCERNING INDOCHINA, FONOFF OFFICIALS HAVE REPEATEDLY EXPLAINED TO US THAT THEY PURSUED POLICIES AFTER 1973 REFLECTING FAITH IN THE VIABILITY OF THE PARIS ACCORDS. TO JAPANESE, THE ACCORDS APPEAR NOW TO BE A SHAMBLES. SIMILARLY, POLICIES OF SUPPORT IN THE UN FOR THE GKR AND FOR THE GVN IN INTERNATIONAL FORA NOW IN THE FACE OF MASSIVELY SUCCESSFUL COMMUNIST MILITARY ACTION, RISK DOMESTIC CRITICISM FOR HAVING BEEN UNREALISTIC AND SHORTSIGHTED.

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5. TO MANY JAPANESE, CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS APPEAR TO BE, IN THE PHRASE OF MANY EDITORIALS, THE TURNING POINT IN INDOCHINA. MOOD IN GVN'S AND GKR'S EMBASSIES IN TOKYO, SHARED BY FONOFF AT LEAST, IS GRIM. SADDENED, APPREHENSIVE TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, GOJ AND JAPANESE PRESS GENERALLY SEEM TO EXPECT FAMILIAR RELATIONS AND POLICIES IN INDOCHINA TO SUDDENLY END.

6. REFLECTING THIS MOOD AND ASSESSMENT, FONMIN MIYAZAWA IN MARCH 25 DIET INTERPELLATIONS SAID THAT JAPAN'S INDOCHINA POLICY WOULD HAVE TO BE REASSESSED. MIYAZAWA IS REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD DIETMENT THAT JAPAN'S "PEAHA" POLICY BASED ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS ACCORDS HAS BEEN UPSET. ECONOMIC AID TO NVN AND SVN WOULD BE SHIFTED FROM RECONSTRUCTION OBJECTIVES TO HUMANITARIAN RELIEF FOR

REFUGEES. EFFORTS WOULD BE MADE TO PRECLUDE ANY AID WHICH
COULD BE DIVERTED EVEN INDIRECTLY TO STRENGTHEN MILITARY
POTENTIAL.
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